

Environmental Update

On September 13, 2019 during removal of floor slabs and foundations at the former hospital site, the demolition contractor uncovered material which was stained and had a strong solvent odor. EA Group, the company providing environmental oversight for the project, immediately sampled this material and sent it for lab analysis.

The contaminant found in these materials was tetrachloroethylene (PCE), which is a chlorinated solvent most commonly used in dry cleaning. The source of the contamination is unknown, but we suspect that it came from the hospital laundry which was located in this area in the 1950s. The contamination has likely been trapped under the floor slab for several decades. PCE was often mishandled or improperly disposed of prior to stricter environmental regulations in the 1970s.

Although this issue was unanticipated, the City was prepared and had resources allocated to address issues arising during the demolition and site preparation. As the owner of the property, and very likely the operator of the hospital when this contamination was released, the City has an obligation to clean up this contamination, ensure the protection of the neighborhood, and make the site safe for re-use.

EA Group brought on Brownfield Restoration Group (BRG) as a subcontractor based on their experience with similar sites and situations. BRG mobilized quickly to drill soil and vapor sampling points along Marlowe Avenue to determine if the contamination had migrated off-site. Current sampling shows no evidence of off-site migration and no impact of this chemical to neighboring properties. The basements and foundations of the hospital were cut into shale bedrock which appears to have held the contamination in place under the floor slab until it was uncovered during demolition.

BRG then took up the task of characterizing and removing the contaminated materials from the site. Specially certified hazardous materials handlers were hired to excavate and transport this material to the appropriate landfills.

These cleanup activities are complete and the City has received a No Further Action letter for the property through the [Ohio EPA's Voluntary Action Program](#) (VAP). VAP requires extensive testing, risk assessment, and reporting which is compiled into a document describing the environmental problems found at the site, how those environmental problems were investigated and how the site was cleaned up. There are 133 other sites which have received No Further Action letters across Cuyahoga County. This tool is recognized as a way to ensure the suitability of the site for redevelopment and the protection of surrounding properties.

The City is taking an additional step and is currently working with the Ohio EPA to provide an Environmental Covenant on the property that will ensure the site and future development is managed in accordance with an agreed upon plan.

On November 13, 2019 the City held an informational meeting with the residents of Belle and Marlowe Avenues adjacent to the hospital site to answer questions about the ongoing site preparations, environmental issues, and other questions of interest to those residents. View the presentation given at this meeting, [here](#).

For more information, please contact the City of Lakewood's Planning Department at 216-529-6630.